

Moon Salesmen:

Presidential Speeches and Personal Experiences of the Apollo 11 Moon Landing



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Abstract

The aims of this thesis are to explore the speeches and rhetoric of United States Presidents John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon regarding the Apollo Moon landing project and look for the effects of that rhetoric on the general public's opinion on Project Apollo. The methods used for examining the presidential speeches are Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, where DA is used to look at the language on a general level, and CDA to analyse political relations within said language. The main finding from Kennedy's speeches is his advocacy of ideological supremacy over Communist countries. Nixon's speeches were in stark contrast with Kennedy's, with détente being the dominant theme.

This material is complemented with interview data provided by Kent State University Professor Kenneth Bindas. His "NASA Moon Landing Oral History Project" was conducted in 2015 and 2016, where his students interviewed 87 people, who were born in 1951 or before, therefore being a full-fledged member of the society by the Apollo 11 landing in 1969. Most of the interviewees do not refer to the two presidents at all, and bring up their personal stories, the Vietnam War and racial injustice as the key events of that time. Some of the interviewees refer to Kennedy in relation to the Moon landings, but Nixon, even though he was president during the time of the landings, is rarely mentioned in the interview data. Prior research, along with these interviews, point that Nixon's career and public image is very much overshadowed by the Watergate spying scandal, and his involvement in Project Apollo is rarely remembered.

The thesis also covers some of the opinions people of different identity backgrounds had of Project Apollo. These are also found in the interview data, but also from other, prior research. The white male populace felt pride and patriotism when Apollo 11 landed on the Moon, but minorities felt disconnected from it. Racial injustice towards the African-American populace distanced them from Apollo, as millions of dollars were poured into flying a handful of white men into space, when thousands of people of colour were housed in uninhabitable conditions. In many of the interviews given by women, they have no or very little recollection of Apollo. This reflects their place in the society in 1969: to stay at home and look after the children, when men were out forming social circles to discuss and enjoy matters such as Apollo.

The conclusion of this thesis is that Kennedy's agenda evident in his speeches, the importance of the Moon landings in the Space Race and ideological supremacy, is still remembered and thought of as a valid point, therefore Kennedy's rhetoric is considered a success. Nixon's policy of détente is

evident in his speeches, but it is not referred to at all in the interview data, therefore his rhetoric was not as successful as Kennedy's.

Tiivistelmä

Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman tarkoituksena on tutkia Yhdysvaltain presidenttien John F. Kennedyn ja Richard Nixonin puheita ja retoriikkaa Apollo-kuulennoista, ja tämän retoriikan vaikutusta kansan mielipiteeseen aiheesta. Tutkimusmetodeina toimii Discourse Analysis (diskurssianalyysi) ja Critical Discourse Analysis (kriittinen diskurssianalyysi), joista DA:n avulla tutkitaan kieltä yleisellä tasolla, ja CDA:lla myös poliittisia suhteita kielen sisällä. Kennedyn puheista välittyy argumentointi ideologisen ylivallan saamiseksi kommunistisista maista. Nixonin puheiden pääteema oli liennytyt, mikä on käytännössä vastakkainen lähtökohta Kennedyn argumenteista.

Tätä materiaalia tukee Kent State University -yliopiston professori Kenneth Bindaksen ystävällisesti luovuttama haastatteludata, jossa hänen opiskelijansa haastattelivat 87:ta henkilöä, jotka olivat syntyneet vuonna 1951 tai aiemmin, ja täten olivat täysiä yhteiskunnan jäseniä vuonna 1969. Suurin osa haastatelluista ei mainitse edellä mainittuja kahta presidenttiä ollenkaan, ja sen sijaan mainitsevat tuon ajan tärkeistä tapahtumista kysyttäessä muun muassa heidän henkilökohtaisia tarinoitaan, Vietnamin sodan ja rotuerottelun. Muutama haastateltava mainitsee Kennedyn suhteen kuulentojen puolesta puhujana, mutta vaikka Nixon oli presidentti lentojen aikaan, hänet mainitaan haastatteluissa vain hyvin harvoin. Aiempi tutkimus, yhdessä näiden haastattelujen kanssa osoittaa, että Nixonin ura ja maine on Watergate-vakoiluskandaalin tahraama, ja hänen osallistumistaan Apollo-projektiin ei juuri muisteta.

Tutkielma kattaa myös mielipiteitä, mitä eri identiteetin omaavilla kansalaisilla oli Apollo-projektista. Nämä mielipiteet ovat esillä haastatteludatassa, mutta myös aiemmassa tutkimuksessa. Valkoiset miehet tunsivat ylpeyttä ja isänmaallisuutta Apollo 11 -lennon laskeutuessa Kuun pinnalle, mutta vähemmistöt eivät tunteneet samanlaista yhteyttä tapahtumaan. Rodullinen epätasa-arvo afrikkalaisamerikkalaista vähemmistöä kohtaan erotti heidät muun kansan yhteenkuuluvuuden tunteesta. Miljoonia dollareita käytettiin muutaman valkoisen miehen lennättämiseen Kuuhun, samalla kun rotuvähemmistöt kärsivät esimerkiksi elinkelvottomista asumisjärjestelyistä. Usealla haastatellulla naisella ei ole juurikaan muistikuvaa Apollo-kuulennoista. Tämä heijastaa heidän asemaansa vuoden 1969 yhteiskunnassa: naisten tuli jäädä kotiin huolehtimaan lapsista, samalla kun miehet pystyivät muodostamaan sosiaalisia piirejä, joissa keskustella ja nauttia Apollon kaltaisista aiheista.

Tutkielman päätös on se, että Kennedyn puheissa esiin tuleva agenda, eli kuulentojen tärkeys ”Space Race” -avaruuskilvassa ja ideologisen ylivallan saamisessa, muistetaan yhä. Haastattelujen ja aikaisemman tutkimuksen valossa Kennedyn retoriikkaa voidaan pitää onnistuneena. Nixonin liennytyspolitiikka käy ilmi hänen puheissaan, mutta siihen ei viitata ollenkaan aikalaishaastatteluissa, eli hänen retoriikkansa ei ollut yhtä onnistunutta kuin Kennedyn.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The year was 1969. On July 20th, Neil Armstrong took his first step on the lunar soil and said the words that will echo on probably as long as humankind exists: “This is one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” These words were broadcasted from the Moon on live television, a feat almost as spectacular as going to the Moon itself. From this Earth, where even parts of the civilised world had no electricity, man had put himself on another celestial body, something that had been mere science fiction only a few short decades ago.

A defining factor of that time was the Cold War, and its subcomponent, the “Space Race”, which was an unofficial, but very real, competition between the United States of America and the Soviet Union to conquer the unknowns of space. By 1961, Soviet Union had already gained a significant lead: they had sent the first artificial satellite, the first animal and even the first man into space. The United States appeared to be losing the race, and therefore set its sights on the ultimate goal attainable at the time: landing a person on the Moon and bringing them back to Earth safely, before the Soviets could achieve the same. Regarding this national goal, Kennedy delivered the “Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs” on May 25th, 1961, stating the following:

I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space, and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.

(Kennedy, “Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”)

This was said by Kennedy to convince the Congress that there is only a single way left to win the Space Race and save the whole nation’s pride, and perhaps also his own pride as state leader. This national pride was acknowledged by the Americans themselves as well, as interviewees from that era affirm: “- - the democratic way of life could get a guy, a person to the moon before the Communist way of life and that’s kind of what it boiled down to” and showing “that America was better than the Russians” (Bindas, 204). Many US citizens felt great pride in seeing their flag planted on the lunar soil, but that pride was not shared by all. For example, many African-Americans were protesting against spending billions into spaceflight, when there were a lot of people living in unacceptable conditions within the United States (Maher 141, as cited by Bindas, 205).

In this thesis, the notion of ideological supremacy, and how it is promoted in John F. Kennedy’s speeches, is analysed with the help of discourse analysis theories. Looking at the content of the speeches, the aim of Kennedy was evident: to convince the nation that funding the Apollo missions

to the Moon was of utmost importance in proving United States' ideological supremacy over Soviet Union. His actor-like demeanour and good oratory skills helped win over the nation, and in the end, after his untimely death, land a man on the Moon. Even though Kennedy's policies did not appeal to all United States' citizens (Bindas, 205-206), he was generally a liked president, and his word was trusted (Sneed; Peterson, 223). That is why this thesis analyses how Kennedy influenced the people as an orator and a leader of a nation.

Due to Kennedy's early passing, he could not witness the Apollo 11 Moon landing, nor could he benefit from the popularity gains it would have provided. Instead, it was President Richard M. Nixon who presided over Apollo 11 and subsequent Apollo missions. By including Nixon in this analysis, Kennedy is given a counterbalance and a comparison point, to see how his involvement and personal interest in Apollo affected his speeches. Nixon's political career was abruptly ended by the Watergate spying scandal, and that blunder is often the first thing he is remembered by (Nichter, 166). While this thesis acknowledges Nixon's involvement in criminal activities, it focuses on the Apollo missions (which were conducted mostly before Watergate). Therefore, the procedure regarding Nixon is to remain as neutral as possible in regard to the end of his career.

As the speeches of the presidents are analysed, their effects can be seen in the people through interviews. Kent University Professor Kenneth Bindas' "NASA Moon Landing Oral History Project" from 2015 to 2019 is a collection of 87 interviews, in which people who were alive in 1969 were asked to recall that era, especially the Moon landings. Analysing that data and looking for references to the two president's rhetoric gives insight into how well Kennedy's and Nixon's agendas resonated with the people of the United States. Based on these interviews, Bindas wrote the 2019 article "'Somebody is really up there!': The 1969 Moon Landing as Historical Marker for an Era", as historical analysis of that era. This article is also used in this thesis to provide context for the cultural aspects of the data.

Critical Discourse Analysis provides the tools to analyse the presidents' rhetoric, context, and political power, and in turn, those factors are looked for in the interview data collected by Bindas and his associates. The interviews are not analysed with CDA, as they are not rehearsed and are not meant to convey political power or influence. Instead, the method for analysing the interviews is ethnographic analysis, as it focuses on individual histories being told through stories.

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

This thesis carries two parallel research aims. The first is to analyse how the US Presidents John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon convinced the nation of the importance of their respective goals regarding space aviation and Moon landings, and how the two presidents' agendas and rhetoric differed from each other. The second aim of this thesis is to investigate how did the people of the United States perceive the Moon landing project, Apollo, as a nation, as majorities and minorities, and as individuals.

Research Questions:

1. What was the political agenda of landing on the Moon promoted in John F. Kennedy's speeches?
2. What was the political agenda evident in Richard Nixon's statements regarding the space effort?
3. To what extent, if any, do interviewees of Bindas allude to Kennedy and Nixon?
4. How did United States citizens view Project Apollo on a nationwide, group and individual level?

1.2 Research Material

The main data analysed in this thesis are presidential speeches by President John F. Kennedy and President Richard Nixon. "Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs" and "Address at Rice University on the Space Effort" were chosen out of Kennedy's speeches. Out of Nixon's speeches, "Proclamation 3919—National Day of Participation Honoring the Apollo 11 Mission" and "Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts Aboard the U.S.S. Hornet Following Completion of Their Lunar Mission" were chosen for analysis. As the President of the United States gives hundreds or even thousands of addresses of various subjects during their presidency, these few addresses were searched for in the American Presidency Project database (precedency.ucsb.edu) using relevant search terms for each president, such as "moon", "apollo", "space", etc. Each speech was chosen due to its importance and relevancy regarding Project Apollo. The chosen speeches had to have a relation to the Moon landing project, and out of the speeches having that aspect, the most well-known ones were included for analysis in this thesis, such as Kennedy's "Address at Rice University on the Space Effort" containing the famous "We choose to go to the Moon" line.

1.2.1 “NASA Moon Landing Oral History Project”

Kent State University Professor Kenneth Bindas provided the 87 raw interviews conducted in 2015-2016 and used in his “NASA Moon Landing Oral History Project”. That material was then re-evaluated, reorganized, and used in this thesis. The original interviews were collected by students of Bindas. When assigning this project, Bindas instructed the interviewers as follows:

This project has several learning goals. The first is introducing the power and meaning of oral history. By talking to people who have lived through historical events, we can understand how events impacted and were understood by the people at large. Second, the construction of the interview allows for the empowerment of the interviewee and introduces the interviewer to their own understanding of their historical place. Third, the project encourages and helps to develop focused listening on the part of the interviewer be engaged as a listener. These all lead to the fourth and final learning goal, namely the recognition that history is made up of stories – millions of them – of people in a specific time and place that have meaning to the present.

(NASA Moon Landing Oral History Project)

This assignment ties into the ethnographical approach into the interview data later in this thesis. This wider scope of the original project allowed for a broader scale of subjects to be analysed, and from that, this thesis can narrow that scope. The same data can be used to look for connections between the populace and the general public. From the original 87 interviews, 13 were chosen to be included in this thesis, as they contained suitable references to Presidents Kennedy or Nixon, or to the cultural impact of the Apollo missions. The majority of the interviews contained no such references. This is a finding in itself, that the presidential discourse of Kennedy and Nixon was not influential enough to be mentioned in more than a handful of interviews.

The interviewees for the NASA Moon Landing History Project were chosen on one condition: they had to be born on or before 1951, making them 18 or older by 1969. That was to ensure that the interviewee was a full member of the society, old enough to feel something about the Moon landings. The interviews were conducted as in-person interviews, except for the rare occasion when that was not possible due to distance or other reasons, remote connections were used instead. Each interviewer recorded and transcribed their interviews, and those transcripts were then turned in.

The original interview data contained full names and other personal details, but as many of those details as possible were redacted, to conserve the privacy of the interviewees. As the interviews were done in the United States, European GDPR laws do not apply. Concerning the research conducted in University of Oulu, the data was kept on a local drive with biometric and password encryption and

was erased when it was no longer needed. The handling of the data was validated with the Data Privacy Officer of University of Oulu, Sirpa Aalto, in October 2020.

Some of the interview questions were open ones, such as “what was it like being a man/woman in the time period”. Answering these, the interviewees could express their own views of the era. Many interviewees bring up their own personal memories at first, meaning that Apollo was just a sidenote in their daily lives, which is inevitably true for most people. The most directed questions were about the interviewees’ opinion of NASA and the space effort, and where the interviewees were during the landing on July 20, 1969. Despite not being directed for the uses of this thesis, as the interview questions never mention Kennedy, Nixon or other presidents, the encompassing nature of this data allows for smaller-scale studies to be done within.

As the scale of the interview project is relatively small, and the scope of this thesis is even smaller, the decision to look into the interview data as qualitative research, not quantitative, is reasonable. Regarding the question of cherry-picked, qualitative interview data, author Layna Mosley argues in her 2013 book “Interview Research in Political Science” that “purposive or quota samples may be good enough in many cases to verify relationships first observed and validated using other methods” (32). This is the case in this thesis, where the relationship between the presidents and the people of the US is known to exist and is analysed with CDA and DA, and the interview data provides the viewpoint of the general populace into the importance of space exploration, for example.

1.3 Methodologies

With the research data established, the methods must now conform to it. Speeches are often scripted, but in the end, they must be said aloud to become speeches, rather than text on paper. An exception to this is Nixon’s “Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts Aboard the U.S.S. Hornet Following Completion of Their Lunar Mission”, where he addresses the astronauts in a non-scripted way, but the other materials to analyse are pre-written and well-rehearsed. Therefore, the methods must be capable of analysing spoken word and discourse. At this stage, defining the term “discourse” is vital: the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines discourse as “1. verbal interchange of ideas, especially conversation; 2. a: formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject b: connected speech or writing c: a linguistic unit (such as a conversation or a story) larger than a sentence”. Out of these terms, 2a overlaps the most with speeches, as they are not conversation, but more like monologue. Even though this is a valid explanation, and “extended expressions of thought” are analysed, the matters of this thesis are more politically focused, and need a more detailed explanation.

Merriam-Webster can give us a simple definition, but a more refined version is found in Cohen, Manion and Morrison's "Research Methods in Education" (574):

'Discourse' is a very slippery term. We use it here to indicate the meanings that are given to texts which create and shape knowledge and behaviour, not least by the exercise of power through texts and conversations. A discourse is a way of thinking, perhaps culturally or institutionally conditioned, which, like a paradigm, is legitimated by communities, often those with power.

Even the professionals agree that the term discourse carries varied meanings. For this thesis, "the exercise of power through texts and conversations" is a very suitable explanation for discourse, as the relations of power play a big role in the analysis.

As Cohen, Manion and Morrison tell, the discourse is legitimated by the communities (574). The populace of the United States can be treated as one big community, and the discourse of the president as the leader of the nation is one of the major tools at the president's disposal. However, that said big community is not monolithic, and this thesis also wishes to analyse the smaller sub-communities' experience of Project Apollo.

Stephanie Taylor further elaborates on the matter of discourse in her book "What is Discourse Analysis": "Among many other aspects of language use, [discourse analysts] study differences in how people speak (and write) which are linked to class and other social categories, or to a particular activity, situation, role and purpose" (2-3). As discourse is more than just speech, the tools analysing it must take other than linguistic factors to accord as well.

The main tool of analysing the speeches of President John F. Kennedy and President Richard M. Nixon is Critical Discourse Analysis, an interdisciplinary method for analysing text or speech. CDA is used to analyse the presidents' choice of words, allowing the viewer to see exactly how the rhetoric is used to persuade listeners of those speeches into believing the agenda. Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter referred to as CDA) is described by authors Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer as "fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (2). CDA takes social injustice and social power into accord when analysing texts, and that makes it a suitable tool for analysing Kennedy's and Nixon's influence over a whole nation. The viewpoint of CDA into language is through the powerful people who use it to exert that power over the less powerful (Wodak; Meyer, 10), such as Kennedy's and Nixon's position as the President of the United States over the general populace. CDA is about critically analysing the language used by the people in power and

are responsible for inequality, even though their power grants them the capability to correct it (Wodak; Meyer, 10), very much like Kennedy in his early years of presidency (Bindas, 205; Snead & Peterson, 134).

CDA falls under the umbrella term of Discourse Analysis (DA). Taylor says that Discourse Analysis is about words, text, and language, and CDA can analyse even the organisation of text, pictures, and headlines on a newspaper page (77). DA is summarised as “the close study of language and language use as evidence of aspects of society and social life” (Taylor, 4), and that is affirmed by van Dijk in his work (111). From this, a question arises: Why not just use Discourse Analysis? As mentioned, CDA authors describe their method as “choos[ing] the perspective of those who suffer, and critically analys[ing] the language use of those in power” (Wojak; Meyer, 10). To put it shortly, CDA is a more focused form of DA, which aims to identify relations to politics and the ability to take political aspects into consideration while analysing discourse. For that reason, CDA is the main analysing tool for this thesis.

CDA is used in this thesis as a tool to dissect media and public speeches regarding the Moon landing missions. It provides the means of analysing social issues and the relations of power behind them, as well as looking into how John F. Kennedy pushed and sold his agenda of winning the Space Race to the people of the United States, and how Nixon used Kennedy’s Apollo project to further his own popularity. They were, in a way, both in position of power and in a recipient’s role since they were leaders of the nation, as well as having to gain the validation of the people for the Apollo project in Kennedy’s case, or their own public image in Nixon’s. This falls under the category of social and political identity, further elaborated by Teun A. van Dijk’s work “Society and Discourse : How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk” from 2009, where his principles of analysing of British PM Tony Blair’s speech can be applied into Kennedy’s and Nixon’s speeches.

Concrete examples of analysing the speeches and their content itself using CDA are finding binary oppositions (us vs. them, rationality vs. irrationality, over-emotionality), contextualisation signs (emphasis on the use of adjectives to bring the writer’s argument across, for example) and cohesion (using language to link phenomena together to bring a point across) (Locke, 58-61). Written media is simple to analyse with this toolkit, but words spoken out loud carry more meaning with stress, pausing and even facial impressions. Therefore, the analysis done in this thesis concentrates on the words as if they were written alone, not the speeches in their spoken entirety.

The third part of this thesis analyses interview data collected by Bindas’ students for connections between the memories of the interviewees and the rhetoric of Kennedy and Nixon. Interviews are a

powerful research tool, but they have their own nuances. The interviews are collected and analysed ethnographically. History is more than the histories of states and wars, it comprises of every person's individual story as well. Ethnographic research explores those stories, and forms a bigger picture of cultural identities, for example. This means that parts of the interview data may be discarded or chosen based on its usefulness to the research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison argue, that "in ethnographic enquiry sampling is recursive and ad hoc rather than fixed at the outset; it changes and develops over time" (229). The interviewees were allowed to provide their own view of the world quite freely, and were not guided back to Project Apollo, if they did not recall it well or chose not to talk about it. The presidents or their rhetoric was not mentioned or asked about at all. Therefore, the data set is small, but the spontaneous mentions of Kennedy or Nixon, or the allusions to their policies mean that they indeed touched and moulded the thoughts of the alluding interviewees.

2 SPEECHES HELD BY PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

This section covers the two most relevant speeches regarding the space effort by President John F. Kennedy, the “Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs” and “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”. In these two speeches, Kennedy addresses the United States Congress and the whole nation, pushing his agenda of ideological supremacy over Soviet Union through advances made in the field of space aviation. The era was riddled with international political crises, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War, and Kennedy’s public speeches were critical in conveying the government’s intentions to the nation.

As with every presidential speech, there can be one or more “ghost writers” behind the speech, other than the president himself. But as the speeches were spoken aloud by Kennedy, and the influence of the words contained within the speeches was expressed and brought out by him, referring to the speeches as Kennedy’s is best suited for this thesis. This simplifies the analysis and citing processes and helps the reader to stay on track. And as there were many other contributors to the United States entering the Space Race, for the sake of simplicity, Kennedy is recognized as the *primus motor* of that idea and decision, and he is credited for it. But for the reader’s advice, when for example a decision is credited for Kennedy in the upcoming parts, there have been many advisors alongside Kennedy within that decision.

2.1 Kennedy’s Political Context

Knowing Kennedy’s context and political background is vital before attempting to analyse his speeches. Approaching the 1960 Presidential election, Kennedy emerged victorious from the Democrat primary election (Sneed; Peterson, 40). With ample resources for campaigning coming from his father, a wealthy businessman, Kennedy went on to challenge and defeat Republican candidate Richard Nixon in the presidential election. Kennedy’s winning tactics included criticizing Eisenhower’s incumbent government for not opposing communism enough and hindering economic growth (Sneed; Peterson, 45). During Eisenhower’s presidency, in 1957, the Soviet Union had already launched the Sputnik satellite, and Kennedy used this argument to criticize the lack of missile technology development in the United States against the Republican party (Sneed; Peterson, 46). Unknown to him at the time, Kennedy would become a strong advocate of space aviation during his presidency.

Kennedy’s involvement and interest in space aviation can be argued to have begun in late 1960, when he was introduced to the relationship of civil and military aviation by his political advisors Neustadt and Wiesner (Snead; Peterson, 90). The advancements gained in rocket technology due to space

exploration could be implemented into intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), increasing their range and yield. The direct increase of ICBM development funding would have alarmed both the Soviet Union and the opposers within United States, but this way it could be masked within peacetime expenses. Indeed, the value of the progress of space aviation carries is intrinsic, but during those very uncertain times of the Cold War, translating that progress into gains in military power was very valuable as well. As the threat of nuclear strikes was at its peak, military research and development expenses would largely consist of either nuclear weapons or the means to carry them, and the Space Race was the perfect opportunity to hide them in plain sight, and also to gain ideological power with scientific advancement.

While military power carried value in Kennedy's agenda, he was also genuinely concerned about the possibilities of the Soviets conquering space before the United States. Before delivering "Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs", he consulted his advisors, most notably then-Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, to explore any possibilities to catch up to and surpass the efforts of Soviet Union: "He particularly asked Johnson to determine if there was 'any other space program which promises dramatic results if we could win'" (Snead; Peterson, 91). This was only a month before addressing the Congress and delivering the promise "before the decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon." (Kennedy, "Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs"). Within that month, the decision was made to fully commit to the Space Race, and the big obstacle that remained was to gain the congressional and public approvals. Kennedy would have to strongly appeal to the nation, if he were to get all the support he wanted to.

2.2 "Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs"

On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy delivered a speech to the United States Congress, where he rallied for the support of the Congress and the US as a nation. This speech, early into the decade, was to prove the importance of going to the Moon and to set the timeline for the project: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth" (Kennedy, "Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs"). This speech would set the rules in the otherwise unmoderated Space Race, where both superpowers had achieved quite little up to that point, at least in the scale of landing a man on the Moon. Soviet Union was still ahead with the 1957 launch of Sputnik 1, the first satellite, and the 1961 flight of Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space. United States had capabilities and potential, and at the time of this speech by Kennedy, they had matched the feats of the Soviets with satellite Explorer 1 and Alan Shepard's spaceflight earlier in May.

As of the rhetoric analysis of Kennedy's speech, in Section IX: Space, he uses methods familiar to CDA to sell his agenda to the nation. He creates a binarism, appealing to the people of the US: "Finally, if we are to win the battle that is now going on around the world between freedom and tyranny..." (Kennedy, "Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs"). This great juxtaposing of "freedom and tyranny", referring to the United States and Soviet Union, respectively, emphasises that US must prove that their way of life is superior, or fall to tyranny. CDA recognises these kinds of binarisms as well, saying that "often one particular 'pole' is privileged in a discourse and the other pole condemned or suppressed" (Locke, 58). United States as a nation was founded on the basis of freedom, that anyone can go there and live a life where everyone has a chance, and nobody is limited by monarchs or tyrants. Kennedy chose to use those two ends of the spectrum to perhaps exaggerate the differences in the ways of life between the US and USSR, and to create a clear divide between "us" and "them", as if the people of the two nations were inherently different in nature and communism as inherently evil.

Kennedy continues by saying "time for this nation to take a clearly leading role in space achievement, which in many ways may hold the key to our future on Earth". This refers to the Cold War, where in fields of science and technology, the two nations competed in which one could beat the other's achievements. As ideologies, democracy and communism relied on the support of people to stay in power. Nations prone to ideological change, such as developing nations, as well as established ones with possibilities for a revolution, looked up to the United States and Soviet Union as world leaders and felt like they had to choose one ideology over the other and pick a side in the Cold War. An example of this was the division of Vietnam, where the north was communist and the south democratic. To expand their sphere of influence, the two leading nations would assert ideological dominance, rather than military or financial dominance. Ideological dominance could be asserted by for example, advancing in science and technology, and that came to life in the Space Race, where clear goals could be set, and a winner determined.

In the third paragraph of his speech, Kennedy, yet again, creates a binarism: "For while we cannot guarantee that we shall one day be first, we can guarantee that any failure to make this effort will make us last" ("Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs"). Locke argues, that "these antitheses [referring to where the writer is comparing a naive view of the problem with his or her enlightened view] are rhetorically designed to underline a central binary opposition - -: the perceptiveness and authority and the naiveté and dubious authority of other observers" (58). Here Kennedy refers to the politicians who have a middle ground stance of the Apollo program, who wish to wait for a while to see what happens. By creating that binarism, Kennedy affirms that immediate

action must be taken, and that any time spend pondering if funding Apollo is the right option will make United States lose the race. This sense of urgency does not come across straight from that sentence, but its words, as well put out as they are, carry more meaning than on the surface.

After acknowledging that the Soviet Union had made significant advances, such as the first artificial satellite Sputnik, and thus gaining the lead in the Space Race, Kennedy goes on to the part of his speech that would be imprinted into the collective memory of the nation forever:

I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space, and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.

(Kennedy, “Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”)

This paragraph, alongside the words spoken at Rice University a year later, brought the ideological warfare into concrete words and thoughts to work by. Stating that the goalpost is at the end of the decade and no other space aviation feat could surpass this, made the rules of the race clear for the whole world. This was a daring move by Kennedy, considering that the Soviet Union had already sent a man, Yuri Gagarin, to space and brought him back only a month ago, on April 12.

Within the aforementioned quote, Kennedy uses multiple adjectives to intensify his opinion, “intensifiers”, as Locke puts it (59). The use of words “impressive” and “important” in opposition to “difficult” and “expensive” further solidifies Kennedy’s high risk, high reward policy regarding the Space Race. Since the Soviet Union had already reached the first checkpoints, the only option was to go all in and reach for the Moon, or just quit altogether and let the Soviets have their win. Of course, the national pride and American exceptionalism would not let a challenge like this go unanswered, so the decision was made to enter the competition.

From this point, May 25, 1961 onward, the notion of winning the battle of ideological supremacy by landing on the Moon can be traced here from every memory of Bindas’ interviewees, for example the one Edward S. has: “Supposedly it showed our advanced technology in accomplishing [the Moon landing]. And I think that was basically the whole idea. It is to beat them, to show them we are smarter than you are” (Schied). Although not a direct reference to Kennedy, this quote still refers to the concept of ideological supremacy over Soviet Union and Communism.

Kennedy moves on to mention some propositions for space aviation progress, such as lunar space craft, booster rockets and lastly, unmanned explorations; “explorations which are particularly

important for one purpose which this nation will never overlook: the survival of the man who first makes this daring flight. But in a very real sense, it will not be one man going to the moon--if we make this judgment affirmatively, it will be an entire nation. For all of us must work to put him there” (Kennedy, “Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”). This paragraph appeals to individuals as well as the whole nation: Kennedy is concerned for the safety of the individual going to the Moon, proving his capability of compassion for the individual US citizen. Saying that it will not be one man going to the Moon, but the whole nation, means that Kennedy wishes to appeal to the patriot within every citizen, that everyone should work hard to

As of May 1961, the decision to go to the Moon and participate in the Space Race was introduced as still open for discussion, as Kennedy says that “I believe we should go to the Moon. But I think every citizen of this country as well as the Members of the Congress should consider the matter carefully - -“ (“Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”). Arguably the decision was already made beforehand with the president as the driving force, now it only had to be sold to the people, and that was to be done by passing it through Congress.

Kennedy concludes the “Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs” by requesting that every person working on the project and with the government should fully commit to this endeavour. He does not fail to appeal to the people one last time, by describing moving forward “with the full speed of freedom” (“Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”). Freedom is the foundation of the United States, and that is one value the nation will stand by. Referring to freedom is a rhetorical asset for Kennedy, concluding the speech with freedom, conjoined with “the exciting adventure of space” (“Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”). By linking the main point, space, with the stable value of freedom, Kennedy enhances the value of space in his speech. This cohesion is a topic covered by Locke within CDA (60-61).

“Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs” was an introduction to the idea of Space Race to the United States’ populace. By delivering it, Kennedy tested if the time was right, and if the populace would rally behind this idea. By the time of “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”, the idea had matured and gained support, thanks to the great speech held for the Congress.

2.3 “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”

At Rice University in Houston, Texas, on September 12, 1962, John F. Kennedy delivered another speech that would define the Space Race and leave a proverb or a saying to the anglophone world: “We choose to go to the [M]oon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard”. This sentence would echo out every time a question rises, “why do such a

thing?” This, perhaps the most famous cluster of words spoken about the Space Race, is the leading point in Kennedy’s Address at Rice University, and these words continue to define the essence of American exceptionalism regarding space aviation.

President Kennedy begins mentioning how fast technology had advanced in the recent years, and then wants the audience to think of the 50 000 years of man’s recorded history as only 50 years:

No man can fully grasp how far and how fast we have come, but condense, if you will, the 50,000 years of man's recorded history in a time span of but a half-century. Stated in these terms, we know very little about the first 40 years, except at the end of them advanced man had learned to use the skins of animals to cover them. Then about *10 years ago*, under this standard, man emerged from his caves to construct other kinds of shelter. Only five years ago man learned to write and use a cart with wheels. *Christianity began less than two years ago*. The printing press came *this year*, and then less than *two months ago*, during this whole 50-year span of human history, the steam engine provided a new source of power. Newton explored the meaning of gravity. *Last month* electric lights and telephones and automobiles and airplanes became available. Only *last week* did we develop penicillin and television and nuclear power, and now if America's new spacecraft succeeds in reaching Venus, we will have literally reached the stars before *midnight tonight*.

(Kennedy, “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”)

Within this quote, the italicised parts denominate the passage of time, bringing it to a form closer to the people’s understanding. The underlined part highlights Christianity. Of course, the leader of a Christian nation refers to Christianity, even in this kind of paragraph centred in technology, to gain support of the large Christian populace of the United States.

Kennedy’s point in the aforementioned quote was to give a concrete example, something people can fathom and relate to, about how fast technology has advanced, and wishes to place the seemingly hard task of landing a man on the Moon as the next logical step in this continuum. Kennedy’s metaphor of condensing years thousand-fold lets the average citizen understand the pace of the technological advancement, since most of the modern creature comforts have emerged only within months, a small fraction of these imagined 50 years. By making a simplification like this, Kennedy asserts his power and knowledge over the audience (Locke, 1). Kennedy then proceeds to tell that this fast pace creates new problems as the old ones are solved, and that space promises “high costs and hardships, as well as high rewards” (“Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). The usage of the adjective “high” is not a certain contextualisation sign (Locke, 58; van Dijk, 114), since “high”

is part of the known idiom “high risk, high reward”, in which Kennedy wishes to refer to. Those “high rewards” are left undisclosed, as there would be no tangible rewards to be gained from the low magnitude of spaceflight achievable during those times. Perhaps in the future, mankind is able to benefit from settlements on newly discovered planets, but that will be hundreds or even thousands of years into the future, not the few ones that Kennedy would be president.

After that, Kennedy creates a binarism (Locke, 58), also known as a group polarisation (van Dijk, 111) of “them and us”, by saying while some want to rest due to this fast pace, not us. This is not a textbook racist polarisation, as seen often in CDA examples (van Dijk, 112), but an ideological one. Although the same principles are valid: division of “our” and “their” way of life and pointing out the flaws of the opposing one. Kennedy implicitly presents the opposers of Apollo as not adhering to the American way of life, effectively branding them as Communist and Soviet sympathisers. As seen in the interview data, people alluded to this and viewed the Communists as enemies of democracy, and Space Race was about “to beat them to show we are smarter than you are” (Schied). Polarising attitudes, manifesting in the use of “them” and “us” would catch on to the populace from the political discourse.

Kennedy appeals to the audience present at the stadium by praising the city and state: “But this city of Houston, this State of Texas, this country of the United States was not built by those who waited and rested and wished to look behind them” (Kennedy, “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). Kennedy concludes this paragraph by referring to the frontier myth indirectly: “This country was conquered by those who moved forward-and so will space” (Kennedy, “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). Surviving in harsh conditions and progressing onwards despite all odds is a key element in the American national discourse (Caldwell, 37), and Kennedy uses it to appeal to the people in a time, where willingness to progress would define the winner of the Space Race.

Kennedy then brings up the innate need for all of humanity to progress, not just the Americans, and its link to space exploration: “The exploration of space will go ahead, whether we join in it or not, and it is one of the great adventures of all time, and no nation which expects to be the leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in this race for space” (Kennedy, “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). By doing so, Kennedy first indirectly brings up the Space Race and Soviet Union, how they would go to the Moon first if United States would not take up action, another example of the polarisation between US and USSR (Locke, 58; van Dijk, 111). Kennedy points out that the informal title of world leader is at stake here, appealing to American exceptionalism, and then words

out “race for space”. This would later on mould into the Space Race, an idea widely discussed in this thesis.

Within the time of the Cold War, the weaponization of space was a perceived threat, even though it did not manifest in reality. Kennedy includes this in his speech, saying that “We have vowed that we shall not see space filled with weapons of mass destruction, but with instruments of knowledge and understanding” (“Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). This is another polarisation (Locke, 58; van Dijk, 111), that some other power, mainly the Soviet Union, would bring weapons into space, if they would succeed in winning the Space Race. The nuclear threat was ever looming during the Cold War, and this fear within the populace could be used in supporting the Space Race effort. Kennedy, as the leader of the United States, announces that he would do no such thing as bring weapons into space, only “instruments of knowledge and understanding”, yet again proving that the US were fighting for the moral high ground and ideological supremacy with the Space Race.

Kennedy builds up tension towards his focal point by pointing out that some have questioned the Moon landing project as not valuable, something wasteful. He turns this argument for his favour by introducing rhetorical questions: “Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas?” (Kennedy, “Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). His reference to Charles Lindbergh’s flight across the Atlantic brings the attention towards aviation and mentioning that it was only 35 years ago brings out the great potential in the growth of aviation technology: only 35 years ago we first flew across the Atlantic, now we are going to the Moon. The other point of Rice playing Texas is a joke, referring to the rivalry of American football teams of the universities of Rice and Texas to amuse the audience and gain the local support. After the applause and laughter that ensues from the joke, he then brings out his main point of choosing to go to the Moon.

Kennedy concludes his speech by saying:

Many years ago [,] the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said, "Because it is there."

Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. And, therefore, as we set sail, we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.

(“Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”)

He appeals to the large Christian part of the United States in asking God's blessing and yet again, does not fail to mention that the new frontier of space is "the greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked", assuring to the world that winning the Space Race proves ideological supremacy. Also, "setting sail" can refer to Christopher Columbus and other great adventurers from the Age of Discovery, when America itself was found and founded. Only this time, the voyage to the unknown would leave the comforts of our planet and atmosphere behind, as the astronaut "sailors" cross the sea of space.

Concluding the "Address at Rice University on the Space Effort", when this address was delivered, the decision to race to the Moon was already made, and this speech was to solidify its place in the national agenda and discourse. Kennedy uses familiar terms and appeals to the American spirit and exceptionalism to prove the worth of NASA even further, to reach the last opposers. The focal point, "We choose to go to the Moon", implies the optionality of going to the Moon, even though Kennedy continuously provided reasons why the Space Race is of utmost importance to the ideological supremacy and even national security. Accepting the challenge of the Space Race, even with its perceived optionality, meant that the US would assert its political and ideological superiority even further by allocating major resources into scientific and technological progress, rather than military force, for example.

2.4 Kennedy's Summary and Context

To summarise, Kennedy's main tools for pushing the agenda through his speeches were creating binarisms of them versus us, mainly of United States versus Soviet Union, and the idea of American exceptionalism and other phenomena related to it, such as the frontier myth. In it, the settlement of America was seen as the triumph of the people over adverse conditions, where only the strong people flourished and would create the strong nation of the United States (Caldwell, 37). Alongside those mentioned, Kennedy takes the times into accord, and skilfully uses the ever-present fear of nuclear war within his rhetoric. The weaponization of space would prove difficult, but it was still a possibility, enough so to be used to gain support for the Space Race.

Providing context for Kennedy, author Teun Adrianus van Dijk analysis of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's 2003 speech about joining the war in Iraq in his book "Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk" can be used as an example of how discourse is affected by everyone participating in it, even if they were only listeners. Van Dijk argues that "Tony Blair's position as Prime Minister and leader of the government and the Labour Party, as well as his identity as being British, play a vital role in his speech" (213), and the same can be applied to John F. Kennedy

and the two speeches. The social identity of Blair is in his status and power as Prime Minister is implicitly present in his speech as the presupposed knowledge of the recipients and he does not have to affirm it any further (van Dijk, 214), but Kennedy reminds the audience at Rice University of his presidency: “It is for these reasons that I regard the decision last year to shift our efforts in space from low to high gear as among the most important decisions that will be made during my incumbency in the Office of the Presidency” (“Address at Rice University on the Space Effort”). He wishes to affirm that he is the president, the leader of the nation, and his decisions are bold, but correct. Kennedy has the right to propose this sort of expenditure as president, like Blair does as PM regarding going to war (van Dijk, 214), but still feels like he has to remind the nation that he is the one in power by semi-implicitly saying that he is the president.

Van Dijk also discusses Blair’s social identity as a Member of Parliament representing a party, as well as the Prime Minister representing a nation. “- - The majority of the House may well vote against Blair’s motion, so that there is also a question of political polarization within the House [of Commons], and even within Blair’s own party”, van Dijk argues (214). This can be interpreted into Kennedy’s terms as well: Even though Kennedy is the president, he is also a Democrat and did not gain everyone’s vote in the election, therefore, in some people’s eyes, he represents his party more than the nation, and that is something he wishes to mitigate in his speeches, for example by using polarising rhetoric (Locke, 58; van Dijk, 111, 215) in reinforcing Americans as “us” and others as “them”.

Within these speeches, Kennedy’s social and political identity is not centred around being a member of a party or proving a party’s ideological supremacy over others, but in pushing the agenda of going to the Moon. Adversaries for this can come from every segment of the political field, not just the usual opposition. From this, a new type of polarisation emerges: pro-Apollo and anti-Apollo. Just as van Dijk analyses Blair’s push to join the war, the same patterns appear in Kennedy’s rhetoric, and the same social and political identity structures are present: “These polarized political identities may be associated with pacifist or non-pacifist ideological positions, but such identities need not be the same” (Klandermans, as cited by van Dijk, 215). Examples include “there may be people who are not pacifist, but still do not want *this* war” (van Dijk, 215). With Apollo, people might be willing to send unmanned landers to the Moon, but not to commit fully in sending men there, as Kennedy proposes. Kennedy does address these who sit in the middle ground, the ones who “would have us stay where we are a little longer to rest, to wait”, in his speech at Rice University. He does not try to convince them to support, but rather points them out as being against the American spirit of pioneering, in

effort to polarise yet again: if you are not with us, you are against us. This appeals to the evidently larger crowds of undecided citizens, since being undecided does only harm the cause of Apollo.

3 SPEECHES AND OTHER PUBLIC REMARKS BY PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON

3.1 Nixon's Political Context

The decision to take President Richard Nixon's speeches along and compare them to Kennedy's comes from the fact that he was the President of the United States during the time of Apollo 11, in 1969. Nixon was also a Republican president, in comparison of Kennedy being a Democrat. How exactly did the presidential rhetoric evolve from the conception of Apollo to its fruition is also analysed, in the context of United States politics.

During the presidencies of Kennedy and Johnson, and moving towards Nixon's, the 1960's were a decade of change. Beginning in the 50's, multiple civil rights movements, many of them concentrating on the injustice towards African-Americans and women, were gaining a considerable amount of following. While mostly being civil and peaceful, such as the movement lead by Martin Luther King, some of these movements, such as the Black Panthers and the Deacons for Defence, were not peaceful (Hill, 259), resorting in violent outbursts between the black and white populaces. This, in turn, widened the gap between the two groups even further, and made the resurgence of the Republican Party possible. As the election of 1968 grew ever closer, Nixon announced his campaign in February of 1968, marketing himself as the "rational choice in irrational times" (Nichter, 19).

Vice President Hubert Humphrey was pitted to run against Nixon, since incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson pledged not to run for re-election in March 1968. In the election, Nixon won the popular vote by a margin of 500 000 votes out of over 71 million votes cast, and the electoral college with 301 votes against Humphrey's 191. (Nichter, 19-21.) Looking at the narrow margin of the popular vote, the nation was deeply divided in that era. Civil rights were a pressing issue and a concern shared by many, even outside the black populace. In turn, the white majority was not prepared to treat minorities as equals and were dissatisfied by the Democratic government's inability to bring an end to the civil unrest and violent riots. Nixon's promise of law and order appealed to that part of the nation, and in the end, managed to pull slightly ahead in the presidential election.

Nixon thought that while the President of the United States is needed and expected to conduct foreign policy, there was little need for him to engage in domestic policy. Therefore, he created the Domestic Council to handle all the internal problems within the US, so that he could fully commit to foreign affairs, such as détente with Soviet Union and China. Of course, the Domestic Council could not operate without Nixon's jurisdiction and surveillance, but he rarely intervened in the council's work.

Uncharacteristic for a Republican president, Nixon increased social security measures as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product, while simultaneously decreasing defence spending (Nichter, 111). Kennedy had increased the defence budget in the midst of the Vietnam War, Space Race, and missile crises, and since Nixon put great effort in the betterment of foreign relations, his appeasement of both the citizens of the US and foreign leadership by reducing military spending was a success.

Nixon's career is still remembered by the Watergate scandal, and is viewed overall in negative light due to it (Nichter, 166). But by 1973, he had already implemented multiple laws and acts which catered to the needs of minorities and the oppressed, for example the affirmative action plan of 1970, which introduced multiple quotas to the workforce, and the Equal Rights Amendment of 1972. Nixon's appointments in the Supreme Court judged the case of *Roe v. Wade*, which became the landmark decision for women's right to abortion without government intervention and restriction (Nichter, 113). In this light, actions of the Nixon government can be seen as progressive and inclusive. But those actions could also be an implication of larger things in motion: the civil rights movements had finally put enough pressure on the government, so much that not enacting these laws and acts would have seemed anti-progressive and backwards on the international stage. By 1973, the general status quo could have also shifted towards a more inclusive and anti-racist society, and these government policies were just mirroring that shift.

Richard Nixon, as already established, was not particularly known for his involvement in the spaceflight effort, even though he was president during the prime of the Apollo project. He would still reap the benefits of the Space Race, as he presided over the Apollo 11 event in July 1969. Nixon's public remarks about the Apollo missions were scattered and short, but they had a concentration point during July 1969, most notably so during and immediately after the 8-day-long Apollo 11 mission. The data analysed here ranges from July 16 to July 24, during the time that Apollo 11 was in space and, in the case of "Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts Aboard the U.S.S. *Hornet* Following Completion of Their Lunar Mission", immediately after the astronauts had landed back on Earth.

3.2 "Proclamation 3919—National Day of Participation Honoring the Apollo 11 Mission"

Proclamation 3919 was Richard Nixon's presidential order to have July 21, 1969 as a national day of participation to the Apollo mission. Non-essential government officials were given a day off work to watch the astronauts work on the Moon, and eventually lift off from the lunar surface live on television. Private companies were also encouraged to give the day off for their workers. Nixon's identity is in a key position within this proclamation (van Dijk, 214), since his status as a leader allows him privileges, that very few can manage to gain. Being in such a powerful position as the President

of the United States, Nixon was able to give orders that influence the whole nation, and by creating a national holiday for the Apollo 11 broadcast, Nixon directly encouraged everyone to watch the astronauts work on the lunar surface, since that was the reason the day off was given.

Apollo 11 is on its way to the moon. It carries three brave astronauts; it also carries the hopes and prayers of hundreds of millions of people here on earth, for whom that first footfall on the moon will be a moment of transcendent drama. Never before has man embarked on so epic an adventure.

(Nixon, Proclamation 3919)

Nixon opened his proclamation by reminding the listeners that Apollo 11 “also carries the hopes and prayers of hundreds of millions of people here on earth, for whom that first footfall on the moon will be a moment of transcendent drama” (Nixon, Proclamation 3919). From this statement, a question arises: what did the Apollo astronauts accomplish on the Moon, that needed the “hopes and prayers of hundreds of millions”? People on Earth suffered, and still suffer, from famine and injustice, and the answers to those problems will not be found on the Moon. Although there is joy to be found in scientific advancement, that hardly accounts for hundreds of millions to place hopes and prayers on the Apollo flight.

Nixon concluded this paragraph by saying “Never before has man embarked on so epic an adventure” (Proclamation 3919). This can be analysed with Gee’s Subject Tool: “For any communication, ask why speakers have chosen the subject/ topics they have and what they are saying about the subject. Ask if and how they could have made another choice of subject and why they did not” (19). Nixon’s subject was hidden behind his words: he might have spoken about Apollo 11 as a grand feat, but why did Nixon choose the word “man”? It was chosen to represent all mankind, not just Americans, well-fitting the détente policy. The word “man” can be interpreted here as “human” or “humanity”, but it also implicitly means a male human. Apollo 11 was presented as a male feat more than female: the astronauts were all male; the leading staff of NASA was all male. This will be further analysed in the cultural aspect of this thesis.

In the second paragraph of Proclamation 3919, Nixon differed from Kennedy’s rhetoric: “In the words of the plaque the Apollo astronauts expect to leave on the moon [see Figure 1], they go ‘in peace for all mankind.’ The adventure is not theirs alone, but everyone’s; the history they are making is not only scientific history, but human history” (Nixon, Proclamation 3919). “In peace for all mankind” is first interpreted as a very positive statement but could also entail that the US will bring peace to all of the world through ideological and technological superiority. Nixon’s words were chosen carefully,

by him or his ghost writers, to represent a neutral faction, even though the US was fully committed into the Space Race (Gee, 19).

Nixon continued the second paragraph by saying “that moment when man first sets foot on a body other than earth will stand through the centuries as one supreme in human experience, and profound in its meaning for generations to come” (Proclamation 3919). While he is correct, that taking the first steps on another celestial body other than Earth is a valuable feat in terms of science and progress, humanity would benefit much more from progression towards world peace and ending world hunger. United States had engaged in warfare over ideologies, and continues to do so, instead of using those resources for peaceful purposes.

The third paragraph reinforces the meaning Nixon wishes to convey: watch the Apollo 11 mission. Nixon continued by saying “even across the vast lunar distance, television brings the moment of discovery into our homes, and makes all of us participants” (Proclamation 3919). Nixon reminded the people of the United States that the nation was also pioneering television technology. Nixon’s statement also intertwined with Kennedy’s ideology from the early 1960’s of the nation completing the task as a whole, and it was also beneficial as a rhetoric tool for uniting the nation among civil unrest.

In the conclusion of his proclamation, Nixon says:

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninety-fourth.

(Proclamation 3919)

This different sort of piece of this proclamation can be analysed with Gee’s Vocabulary Tool (53): using language of such complexity and seeming oldness validates this proclamation in the eyes of the officials of the government, indicating that the president is not a monarch, but has to abide the rules of the democracy and the tripartite government. To conclude, Proclamation 3919 was a tool for Nixon to spread the idea of Apollo 11 as a national and international uniter of peoples and nations. Nixon did not miss the opportunity to promote Apollo 11 as an achievement for all of mankind, in contrast to Kennedy’s original idea.



Figure 1. Plaque on the landing gear of the Apollo 11 lunar module. NASA.

3.3 “Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes During the Apollo 11 Mission”

This statement was issued by President Nixon on July 17, 1969:

The two men we hope will set foot on the moon represent all mankind.

Their achievement will be the world's achievement. It is fitting, therefore, that the first lunar explorers carry with them some recognition of the sacrifice made by other space pioneers who helped to blaze their trail.

There is no national boundary to courage. The names of Gagarin and Komarov, of Grissom, White, and Chaffee, share the honor we pray will come to Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins.

In recognizing the dedication and sacrifice of brave men of different nations, we underscore an example we hope to set: that if men can reach the moon, men can reach agreement.

“Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes During the Apollo
11 Mission”

The beginning of the statement, “The two men we hope will set foot on the moon represent all mankind” (Nixon, Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes During the Apollo 11 Mission) is the essence of détente, turned upside down from Kennedy’s original idea of the Moon landing being the finish line of the Space Race. In truth, the Apollo 11 astronauts represented only a select few, who felt connected to the American government, which, at that time, was represented almost solely by white men. This statement is in line with Nixon’s other statements about Apollo 11, as it carries détente as its main theme.

The notion of “Their achievement will be the world’s achievement” (Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes) is in direct juxtaposition with JFK’s idea of imposing ideological supremacy with the Space Race and Apollo 11. The global landscape of politics had changed from Kennedy’s time, and the quest for supremacy over other nations had changed into the quest to end hostilities between superpower nations. Also, worth mentioning is that the Space Race was a very secretive ordeal, and both United States and Soviet Union would not engage in technology sharing until the joint mission Apollo-Soyuz in 1975. Therefore, Gagarin and Komarov did not “blaze the trail” for Apollo 11, everything done until 1975 was done in a competitive manner, unlike Nixon wishes to convey in this statement.

Nixon claims that “there is no national boundary to courage” (Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes), and while courage was needed by the astronauts and US officials like

John F. Kennedy, in the context of Apollo 11, other countries were not involved in the alleged “courage”, as they were not involved in the project altogether. Instead, Nixon meant this statement as a tool for détente, giving recognition to the Soviet Union for their space program.

Nixon chose to talk about these subjects because they fit his agenda well, as the Subject Tool helps us to understand (Gee, 19). Especially the naming of the Soviet cosmonauts as equals of the American astronauts is in line with Subject Tool’s research question. Nixon also chose to name the cosmonauts first, and astronauts second, drawing the attention to the former by having them at the beginning of the sentence. By giving this statement, Nixon wanted to point out the similarities of US and USSR, where both had lost great aviators and scientific minds in pursuit of spaceflight achievements. This reinforces Nixon’s policy of détente and re-establishing foreign relations with Communist countries, most notably the Soviet Union and People’s Republic of China.

The most notable part of this statement is the end: “that if men can reach the moon, men can reach agreement” (Nixon, Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes). This is in line with Nixon’s policy of détente, but openly admits that there is a disagreement between the Soviet Union and the United States. Of course, that was common knowledge, but the nature of the Cold War was such that hostilities were not openly admitted, instead they were conducted covertly and through guerrilla and insurgency warfare (Nichter, 161). This agreement Nixon is referring to was slowly in progress, and he needs to soften the political impact of Apollo 11, as Kennedy formed it to be a formidable weapon of ideological supremacy.

To conclude, this short statement issued by President Nixon is purely for the purpose of détente. Mentioning the names of Soviet cosmonauts that died in aviation-related accidents alongside the Americans that shared the same fate serves as an indication that both sides had met significant misfortune along the journey to Moon. Nixon’s political identity as the president and the leading politician in foreign affairs is relevant in terms of Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 215), and in conjunction to that, this statement is implied to be a horizontal one; guided more towards other world leaders of the same stature. Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev was the probable recipient of this statement, not so much the US populace as in the other statements by Nixon.

3.4 “Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts Aboard the U.S.S. Hornet Following Completion of Their Lunar Mission”

As the Apollo 11 astronauts Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins had splash landed in the Pacific Ocean on July 24, 1969, President Nixon visited them aboard the USS Hornet. This visitation was televised, as Nixon addressed the astronauts rather informally, in a conversive manner. This informal manner is in contrast to other, more formal speeches by Nixon, since it provides a more human view into him instead of ghost-written and rehearsed speeches.

Nixon started by addressing the three astronauts by their first names, perhaps trying to ease the atmosphere and the stress that the astronauts have been enduring. He continued as follows:

I want you to know that I think I am the luckiest man in the world, and I say this not only because I have the honor to be President of the United States, but particularly because I have the privilege of speaking for so many in welcoming you back to Earth.

(Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts)

This statement is chosen for analysis in the sense that Nixon was perhaps unwillingly, maybe even subconsciously feeling that he should mention him being the POTUS, in a speech and a setting that clearly was not about his presidency, but of someone else being in the limelight. This is in line with van Dijk’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, where the context and identity of the speaker is in a key role, when determining the power relations of a speaker (214). Choosing to reinforce his identity as the leader of the nation, Nixon used his power as the president to reinforce that status and identity. As this very special occasion was about the Apollo 11 astronauts returning to Earth as heroes, Nixon had to remind the audience that he was still a part of this achievement. This is also reflected in the plaque on the Apollo 11 Lunar Lander (see Figure 1), in which Richard Nixon’s autograph is present along the astronauts’, as if he had been on the Moon himself.

Moving onwards, President Nixon’s first point in the speech was that Apollo 11 had been an international success, with “over 100 foreign governments, emperors, presidents, prime ministers, and kings, have sent the most warm messages that we have ever received” (Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts). This undisclosed “we” can refer to the many political identities Nixon represents, as he addresses the astronauts: Nixon himself as the President (in which case “we” is *pluralis majestatis*, plural form used to indicate a single person’s prominence), the whole government of the US, or other, less implicit groups, such as pro-Apollo politicians (van Dijk, 216).

Nixon mentioned foreign government heads, such as emperors, prime ministers, and kings, as to assure, that governments that would regularly differ very much from the policies and ideologies of the United States also saw Apollo 11 as a positive achievement for the whole mankind, not just for the US or for Western democracy. From this, Nixon's difference with Kennedy is visible: Kennedy's Space Race politics were about competition and ideological supremacy, while Nixon's foreign policy of détente is clearly present in the way he addresses the situation at hand aboard the USS Hornet. This can be analysed differently with Gee's Subject Tool (19), in comparison to other statements. Instead of what Nixon left out (it often being that Apollo 11 was a fully American project), what he inserted in his speech is of importance: multiple different kinds of state leaders, to indicate the variety of the nations, and those nations' ideologies, that sent their kind regards.

Nixon continued with the following words to the astronauts:

Also, I will let you in on a little secret. I made a date with them [the wives of the astronauts]. I invited them to dinner on the 13th of August, right after you come out of quarantine. It will be a state dinner held in Los Angeles. The Governors of all the 50 States will be there, the Ambassadors, others from around the world and in America. They told me that you would come, too. All I want to know is: Will you come? We want to honor you then.

(Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts)

Within this paragraph, Nixon deviated strongly from the regular, formal style of speech a president is expected to use. He implied that he has "made a date" with the astronauts' wives, which would be considered very scandalous, if interpreted literally. Here, the Fill In Tool of Gee (12) can help the analysis: Nixon expected that the astronauts, as well as the television viewers, were capable of deducting that this was meant to be a humorous remark, not an actual secret. In reality, this so-called "date" with the wives was actually the celebratory dinner and parade for the astronauts themselves, but Nixon tried to build the suspense for the astronauts by bringing the dinner into their knowledge through their wives being a part of it.

After a brief conversational part, in which the president and the astronauts talk about the baseball All-Star game and Apollo 8 astronaut Frank Borman visited to exchange a few words with the Apollo 11 crew, Nixon began his closing remarks by saying that " - - that this is the greatest week in the history of the world since the Creation" (Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts). As Kennedy caters to the Christian majority in "Address at Rice University on the Space Effort", so does Nixon in here, but indirectly. The word "Creation" was capitalised in the official White House transcription, but it can also be interpreted as a casual, compact way to say "the beginning of human history" from the speech

it was delivered. Although that is a fringe case, and Christianity, along with prayers etc., is evidently present in these two presidents' rhetoric, as it was often during that era.

Nixon continued the statement by saying that "as a result of what you have done, the world has never been closer together before" (Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts). The Moon landing is portrayed here, yet again, as a pan-Terran achievement, as if every nation could set aside their hostilities, now that two Americans had spent a few hours on the Moon. The policy of détente is ever present, as Nixon tries to keep the leaders of competing nations from seeing Apollo 11 as the victory moment for America, which Kennedy wanted it to be 8 years earlier.



Figure 2. *President Nixon visits Apollo 11 crew in quarantine.* NASA.

3.5 Nixon's Summary and Context

During Apollo 11, eight years had passed since Kennedy delivered his speech to the Congress, where he urged the nation to take immediate action regarding spaceflight, and seven years had gone by from “We choose to go to Moon”. The political landscape has changed both in the US and abroad, and the Cold War had entered a time of *détente*. Nixon's speeches differ drastically from Kennedy's: they are not as divisive of “us” and “them”; they do not promote any ideology over others. Instead, a reoccurring theme in Nixon's public remarks is mankind's unity and cohesion in pioneering space.

Another reoccurring theme in these presidents' rhetoric is the affirmation of their identity and power. As Kennedy mentions it often in his speeches in the beginning of the 1960's, Nixon follows the same path of mentioning his presidency and through that, his stature and power over the nation. Even during the return address of the Apollo astronauts, Nixon has to remind the listeners that he is in charge of the situation. Contrasting Kennedy's speeches, Nixon does not have to convince the Senate, for example, so he rarely directs his speeches towards something or someone in particular; instead, Nixon's speeches are implicitly, almost casually, just sent away, hoping the leaders of other nations would catch his intentions.

A common ground for Kennedy and Nixon was using Apollo as a unifier of people. As Kennedy uses the pioneering spirit to unite America in facing this new frontier of space (Address at Rice University on the Space Effort), Nixon shapes Apollo 11 to be a global achievement (Remarks to Apollo 11 Astronauts, Statement About Honoring American and Russian Space Heroes), trying to unite nations in the time of crisis.

Nixon's relation to space was largely overshadowed by terrestrial problems and affairs, but he is mentioned to have thought of Apollo 11 as “a paradigm shift in terms of the way that Americans viewed the world and as well as their position in it” (Nichter, 106). This change in world view is further discussed in the cultural phenomena section of this thesis. In 1972, President Nixon approved the Space Shuttle program (Nichter, 106), which would solidify USA as the largest operator in space, with the reusable shuttles bringing down the cost of spaceflight (Hepplewhite, 245). Approving such a large endeavour meant that Nixon saw spaceflight and space exploration as a path the United States was willing to follow, not just a dead end or a PR stunt on an international level.

The argument can be made that Nixon was not as involved in the space effort as he could have been, due to the ruling consensus that Apollo was Kennedy's idea and pet project. Nixon had been defeated by Kennedy in the 1960 presidential election by a close margin. While the President of the United

States is expected to be a professional statesman, events like these would surely affect Nixon's relationship with Kennedy.

To conclude, Nixon's agenda is clearly visible within his public addresses regarding Apollo: to further the policy of détente by presenting Apollo 11 as a global achievement, not just United States'. Since Kennedy presented Apollo as the pinnacle and goal of the Space Race, it took Nixon a lot of convincing to portray Apollo in a different, more "friendly" light.

4 ALLUSIONS TO THE PRESIDENTS' RHETORIC

This section explores the NASA Moon Landing Oral History Project interview data provided by Bindas and looks for connections between the speeches of Kennedy and Nixon and the memories of people alive at the time. The interview data was collected by students of Bindas during 2015 and 2016 and requested by me and my thesis instructor in March 2020.

Regarding the ethics of this research, the original data contained all of the personal information of the interviewees, but as much as possible of that information is redacted, as established in chapter 1.2.1. This study does contain sections of race and gender identity, but they are only for the critical dissection of the injustice that minorities faced during the 1960's and 70's. Also, the interviewees are all already or turning 70 as of 2021, so therefore they are in a vulnerable position due to old age. This matter was discussed with the Data Privacy Officer of University of Oulu and was deemed of little risk to the interviewees.

The work was done according to the order of research made by authors Bogdan and Biklen, which is as follows:

1. In the early stages of the research a rough definition and explanation of the particular phenomenon is developed.
2. This definition and explanation is examined in the light of the data that are being collected during the research.
3. If the definition and/or explanation that have been generated need modification in the light of new data (e.g. if the data do not fit the explanation or definition) then this is undertaken.
4. A deliberate attempt is made to find cases that may not fit into the explanation or definition.
5. The process of redefinition and reformulation is repeated until the explanation is reached that embraces all the data, and until a generalized relationship has been established, which will also embrace the negative cases.

(Bogdan & Biklen, as quoted by Cohen, Morrison and Manion, 557)

This thesis follows that order:

1. The baseline was set. Kennedy and Nixon addressed the nation, and the nation reacted in some kind of way. Analysis focused on finding connections between the presidents and the memories of the people.
2. As the interview data was analysed, it seemed that very few interviewees mentioned the presidents themselves, but some referred to their rhetoric.
3. There was no need to adjust the original parameters of finding the connections between the presidents and memories.
4. The negative cases were embraced as they came: the majority of the interviews did not carry any meaningful references or allusions towards Kennedy or Nixon.
5. The original goal was reached: people referred to the rhetoric, but the major finding was that actually very few did refer to the presidents or Apollo, when talking about the key events of that era.

4.1 Allusions Towards John F. Kennedy's Rhetoric

Findings from the interview data show that imminent and explicit connections from the interviewees to John F. Kennedy are conspicuous by their absence: very few people interviewed directly give credit to Kennedy. There are references to Kennedy regarding his assassination as a key event of the 1960's (Schied), but that ultimately had very little to do with the Apollo project.

When asked about remembering the events leading up to July 1969, interviewee named Don specifically mentions the times being "turbulent" when Martin Luther King was assassinated, and "Kennedy, John Kennedy, was really pushing for landing on the Moon, to be the first on the moon" (Almes). When asked about his personal feelings of the landing, Don first says that "it meant a lot of wasted money on the tax payers' part, - - I would rather see them land on the United States, and - - fix up some of the roads and bridges" (Almes). This shows that even among the white male populace, Apollo was not unanimously supported.

Interviewee Thomas was seemingly interested in NASA's endeavours, and talks about his knowledge of it: "I remember the incidents with the first rocket launch [Apollo 1 rehearsal accident] - - Sputnik which Russia put up, and then Kennedy laid down the challenge that we would have a man on the moon, - - and the Mercury Program projects, and the first man in space, - - first was a monkey they sent into space. I remember all those from Cape Canaveral" (Wildauer). When talking about Apollo 11, Thomas also mentions that "I think it was part just to change the attention [from] what was going on in Vietnam and a lot of the government disruption and protests - -. So, it became like a unifying

thing within the country” (Wildauer). This reinforces the idea of Apollo being a distraction, something positive that would enable people to forget the on-going Vietnam War for a moment. Thomas also alludes to Kennedy’s rhetoric indirectly: “- - when we determined we wanted to do something, we were able to pull the resources and do what was envisioned. And do what was necessary commitments and plan ahead to what was going on” (Wildauer). Although worded differently, the content mimics Kennedy’s proposal of “landing a man on the Moon before the decade is out” at the joint meeting of Congress.

Other interviewees allude to the ideas from Kennedy’s speeches, for example Edward tells the following about ideological supremacy over the Soviet Union: “It is to beat them, to show them we are smarter than you are” (Schied). This group polarisation, mentioned in CDA narrative (Locke, 58; van Dijk, 111), affected the populace in the division of the American way and the Soviet one. Those individuals, who did not wish to adhere to the American exceptionalism and pride were prone to be labelled as Communist sympathisers. Even though the Space Race was more than just showing that “we” are smarter than “the others”, ultimately it comes down to that idea of ideological supremacy. Brought into the public eye in large by Kennedy, this part of warfare between ideologies planted itself into the national discourse of the United States as a triumph over Communism, where the Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam War were not. To answer the third research question, “To what extent, if any, do interviewees of Bindas allude to Kennedy?”, the interviewees do allude to Kennedy on an ideological level, but not as much directly to Kennedy himself or his quotes.

4.2 Allusions Towards Richard Nixon’s Rhetoric

From the 87 interviews Bindas’ students conducted, very few mention Richard Nixon by name. Two interviewees specifically mention Nixon being the president at that time, but that information is used to orient and recollect memories from that era (Shaulis, Zebrasky). One interviewee, named Betty, when asked “what do you recall what was going on in the country at the time of the landing?” answers: “Again in nineteen sixty-nine that was, Nixon was president, and that was Vietnam, protest marches for Vietnam was the big thing at the time” (Shaulis). Betty mentions Nixon in a side note, just to orient her memories and to use Nixon as an indicator for the ruling government, that being Republican.

Another interviewee, Elisabeth, remembers Nixon being a “crooked President” (Brady), a reference to Nixon’s famous utterance “I am not a crook” and Watergate. Also, when asked “why do you think the U.S. stopped sending people to the Moon?”, Elisabeth thought that Nixon and his crookedness had something to do with it: “We had a couple of crooked presidents in there, and that might have

had something to do with it. You know, Nixon and what he did. Did he like about the space program, did he not? Because it was such a bad time in the country, maybe that discouraged them from moving on” (Brady). As the Watergate scandal took place in 1971-1974, and Apollo 17, the last Moon landing was in December 1972, the possibility of those two being related exist, but is most likely a coincidence. Missions after Apollo 17 were planned but later cancelled due to NASA budget cuts.

One interviewee, named Edward, answers the question “What was your feeling about the moon landing” with “I thought it was a good thing. I thought it was a positive step for human beings in general” (Zezlina). Following the interviewer’s follow-up question, Edward elaborates: “I kind of hoped that human beings would learn to live together and be more productive than destructive.” This is in line with Nixon’s détente policy, even though Edward refers to humanity as a whole, not as nations.

Even though Nixon himself is not referred to in the interview data, four interviewees remember Neil Armstrong’s famous line, “that’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind”, as he took the first step onto the lunar surface (Maynard, Velez, Zebrasky, Zezlina). This sentence lives on in popular culture as the main quote from the whole spacefaring project, even more so than Kennedy’s “we choose to go to the Moon, not because it is easy, but because it is hard” (“Special Message to Congress on Urgent National Needs”). Armstrong’s sentence is an indirect reference to détente, as it made the achievement of NASA and U.S. taxpayer money into a “giant leap for mankind”, not just a leap for U.S politics. Gee’s Subject Tool (19) directs the listeners to a question: why did Armstrong choose those words? He could have said that “that’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for democracy/freedom/United States”, to name a few patriotic options. But, instead, he chose all of mankind, in line with Nixon’s policy.

To answer the research question “To what extent, if any, do interviewees of Bindas allude to Nixon?”, Nixon is not directly alluded to at all. This is due to Nixon’s politics being much more internationally focused than Kennedy’s policy, therefore not affecting the life of an ordinary American citizen as much as Kennedy’s strong domestic policy.

5 CULTURAL PHENOMENA SURROUNDING PROJECT APOLLO

The aim of this section is to analyse the historical and cultural details of Apollo missions, link them to the views and experiences of the nation, groups, and individuals. These two main points are then compared, and that allows links between them to be drawn, and from that, conclusions to be made. The references to culture or the presidents can be direct or indirect: they can be named implicitly within the interview or cultural phenomenon, or their influence over the nation can manifest in, for example, the frontier myth, American exceptionalism and winning the Space Race in Kennedy's case, or détente, appeasement, and positive US-Soviet relations in Nixon's.

Cultural phenomena and media are strongly linked to the collective memory from an era. As the sci-fi genre gained popularity from space exploration and vice versa, the popularity spiked during the Moon landing project (Bindas, 201). This unintentional marketing for Apollo by the sci-fi genre can be said to have had an influence over the public opinion, just like the presidents' intentional opinion shaping. Although the magnitude of the influence of the cultural phenomena and presidents over the public opinion is still unclear, and so is the answer to the question which one was more influential, arguably them both have moulded the general populace's opinion at least in some scale.

5.1 General Phenomena Connecting to Individual Views of Project Apollo

Kenneth J. Bindas' 2019 article "‘‘Somebody is really up there!’’: The 1969 Moon Landing as Historical Marker for an Era" starts with a personal story, where a person by the name of Bill is said to look at the Moon on July 20, 1969 and think to themselves "somebody is really up there". This ties the experience of an average American to the multi-billion-dollar Apollo project, where the United States spared no expense to put a man on the Moon. Bindas then describes how the Moon landings put the US "in a position of ideological and technical supremacy over the Soviet Union and its allies" (Bindas, 199). The main driving force behind the Cold War and one of its chapters, the Space Race, was for the United States to prove that themselves representing democracy and capitalism are superior to communism, represented by the Soviet Union. This competition was fought on many fronts, including the Vietnam War and of course, space. During that time, the ordinary layman was not scared about losing the Space Race to the Soviet Union as much as they were concerned about the wellbeing of the astronauts themselves and their safe return to Earth. When asked if America was a more significant country in their opinion due to landing first on the Moon, interviewees Edward and Marion did not think so, they were only glad that the United States were able to do such a feat.

Bindas, alongside his students, interviewed 87 people who were alive during that time, and what they could recall about the first Moon landing event. They discussed the idea of worthless expense,

misdirected funding, and the lack of tangible rewards from the project. The interviewed people had the connection to the Cold War in mind, but most of the people did not link the Moon landing project to the other divisive issues of the time, such as women's rights, the Vietnam War, poverty and voting rights (Bindas, 200). Bindas' interview project as well as his article provides research data about the subject, culminated into the thought of the American collective memory and triumph versus the social problems of that time.

The Moon landings were greatly anticipated in the American society and playing a part in it was science fiction. In 1867, Jules Verne published his novel *From the Earth to the Moon*, and ever since, the sci-fi genre has fuelled the world's wildest dreams. Most notable examples of society-moulding science-fiction works include the original *Star Trek* (1966-1969) and Stanley Kubrick's cult classic *2001: A Space Odyssey* from 1968, only a year before the actual landings (Bindas, 201). Even though the sci-fi movies, series, comics etc. did not get published *due to* or *for* the Apollo project, their overall positive influence over the whole multi-million-dollar project cannot be overlooked. This arguable "good promotion" given to Apollo for the duration of the decade could very well have altered the public opinion about tax funds directed to space exploration for the positive, giving the American nation a premonition of glorious space travel across galaxies, pioneered by Apollo.

Bindas also points out that the connection between science fiction and the Apollo missions was made even more concrete by Neil Armstrong pointing out in public that the command module's name, Columbia, was a nod towards Jules Verne's *From Earth to the Moon*. Later, after returning from the Moon, Armstrong yet again connected his experience and Verne's fiction: both space journeys started from Florida, went to the Moon, and landed back on Earth in the Pacific Ocean (Bindas, 202). These connections, made by the first man on the Moon himself, give credibility to the argument that the whole sci-fi genre contributed into shaping the public opinion about space exploration. Public relations were crucial to NASA, since the public's support of them meant that their budget and aspirations were secured. Even though there was a duality in the nation whether space exploration was a just cause or not (Bindas, 201), looking at Apollo 11's success and the following 6 Moon missions launched (one of them being a failure, Apollo 13), clearly the backing for multiple flights to the Moon was present.

This amalgamation of science fiction and people's expectations did not fare well when compared to the reality of what Apollo achieved. Bindas refers to a book on the subject by David Meerman Scott and Richard Jurek called *The Marketing of the Moon*, claiming that "without the efforts of 'high profile, enthusiastic public relations,' the Apollo program might not have achieved success." With the scientific focus set on the composition of the lunar soil, analysing "rocks and dust" could not

compete with the imaginary moonscape that science fiction had created (Bindas, 202). An argument can be made for the immense scientific value of going to the Moon and returning with ample data and materials to analyse, but that did not usher in a new era here on Earth. There was no extra-terrestrial life to be found, nothing of monetary value such as precious metals. Going to the Moon and returning safely was a great feat, but humanity did not gain anything concrete from these efforts. People thought that it would “open the door; we’re all going to be able to go to the moon”, as interviewee Chris said (Duerstreet), but as history has presented itself, that was not the case.



Figure 3. *Earthrise* by William Anders.

Bindas’ article introduces another thought planted into the human society by space exploration. Crewmember William Anders of Apollo 8, a manned mission to orbit the Moon and return, took the famous “Earthrise” photo, where Earth is seen as a blue gem above the Moon’s desolate surface, surrounded by the dark vastness of space. This photo, alongside other photos and videos raised the thought of how small the Earth is compared to the vast void of space. A person by the name Diane tells Bindas during the interview, that seeing the smallness of the Earth gave people “a new perspective that we [were not] as mighty as we thought” (Bindas, 203).

The picture of Earthrise, depicting the beauty of our solitary planet, led to the interest being shifted a small step back towards Earth (Bindas, 202). The desolate, lifeless surface of the Moon alongside the black void of space is so much contrasted by the blue gem in the middle. Earth looks unmistakably

living, a place where there is much to be done and researched. No other place within human's reach was so special nor could offer so much potential for humanity's improvement. Admittedly that oasis of life was very much alone in the vastness of space, a speck of dust in the grand scheme of things, but Earth is a special kind of dust speck since it harbours sentient life. In this discussed idea of Earth-centrism, we, as humans, should focus our efforts to make Earth a better place, instead of turning to space for answers and hope regarding the future of humanity.

The myth of the "frontier" was strongly connected to the pride of the United States during that time, as it had been since the founding days of the nation (Caldwell, 37). As the country itself once was the frontier, space was now dubbed the New Frontier. Interviewee Sam recalled that "historically the country has been all about the frontier, so it [spaceflight] fit right with our national outlook" and that it was "our destiny to explore beyond ... the limits of our planet" (Bindas, 204). Bindas then refers to historian Daniel Immerwahr, saying that space being a new frontier for the United States to conquer was not "merely symbolic". Exploiting potential valuable resources (later to be found non-existent or very difficult to gather) on the Moon and even colonisation were possibilities during that time. While the US worked to create the Outer Space Treaty, making sure no nation could claim the Moon as their own, the planting of the Stars and Stripes on the lunar soil meant that the US had *de facto* conquered the Moon and a new frontier was open (Immerwahr, as cited by Bindas, 204). The US flag planted on the surface of the Moon filled the nation with a sense of pride and the men out there were written as national heroes, as interviewees Beverly and Debra recall the event (Bindas, 204).

Conquering frontiers and proving their way of life suits perfectly with the national discourse of the United States. Going to the Moon was truly a new frontier, in which all its seeming pettiness, carried the passion and hopes of the entire US nation. After all, it was not a long time from the second World War, where the US had displayed its technological and military superiority. By the end of the Second World War, United States was held as a world leading nation due to its military power displayed in the war. This time, the "war" was a more peaceful one, where the polar opposite within the new world order, Soviet Union, wanted to surpass America as the leading nation regarding technological and other similar feats. United States, as a nation and a people, felt that there was a dire need of defending the status of a world leading nation and the superiority of the democratic way of life.

The successful Moon landings also gave the US citizens something that they could feel proud of as a nation. Interviewee Patricia said that the country "did not have a whole lot to be proud of back then", since by 1969 the public support of the Vietnam War was diminishing (Bindas, 204). The picture of young American men, sons, husbands, and fathers dying in a faraway country for nothing except a democratic cause for a few years already, was imprinted into the nation's memory. The United States

urgently needed something that the whole nation could be united under again. The Moon landing provided “a unifying thing within the country”, according to interviewee Thomas W. (Bindas, 204). Seeing the Stars and Stripes planted on the Moon on live television gave the nation something else to think about while the Vietnam War was still in full motion. As the war was a divisive subject among US citizens with constant protesting in Washington D.C., a clear triumph like Apollo 11 was surely a welcome change to the nation at war.

The collective memory of the United States’ populace is determined to surely contain the Moon landings, but the interview data points out that, as strong of a memory it might be, Apollo 11 is sometimes left in the shadow of more palpable events such as the Vietnam War and urban unrest caused by civil rights movements (Bindas, 207). Curfews were in effect due to the rioting (Naples), young men were disappearing from the neighbourhood and dying in Vietnamese jungles, therefore these events literally “hit closer to home” than the Moon landings. Forming a memory of a Moon landing through television only might be harder compared to the concrete sense of fear caused by riots and the grieving of a loved one perished away in war.

When asked about his memory of the Moon landings, interviewee Chris points out that while he remembers watching the first landing live on TV, the subsequent landings did not leave a notable memory imprint. He does mention “when those guys got killed --- when that space capsule caught fire” (Duerstreet), referring to Apollo 1 rehearsal accident, in which astronauts Grissom, White and Chaffee died. This happened in February 1967, and the loss of three lives surely created a stronger memory imprint to go along with the success of Apollo 11. Considering the lessened memory value of the subsequent Apollo flights, at least in this case, the argument can be made that once the excitement of the first Moon landing had faded, the scientific importance of the subsequent flights could not raise as much interest in the general populace as the Space Race value of Apollo 11.

Although in some cases, the memory of the Moon landings was not as strong as of the other pressing matters during that time, it can be said that setting a national goal and achieving it with flying colours had a positive effect on the morale of the American people. Interviewees Joe L. and Bill S. among others say that accomplishing the set goal reaffirmed the sense that United States still was a world leading country (Bindas, 205). Even the revered newspaper *Washington Post* told that “the space program is the clear proof that [the] nation can set a difficult goal and carry it out” (Washington Post, as cited by Bindas, 205). Having the mainstream media affirm the nation’s common sense of unity and pride indicated towards the notion that it was something that all US citizens should feel the same way. But, as Vietnam War had its protesters and naysayers, so did the Apollo project.

5.2 Negative Views of Project Apollo

Some people, politician and layman alike, felt that the funds directed towards going to the Moon would have been better suited in righting wrongs on US soil, rather than merely flying to the Moon. Interviewee Arlene told that “In my opinion, I thought it [funding Apollo] was ridiculous” (Bindas, 205; Linke). Throughout the 1960’s, the Congress had similar debates about funding such a costly project. After John F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued Kennedy’s unwaning support of the Apollo project, and felt that the ideological lead attained should not be given away so easily. Propaganda relied on [American] exceptionalism to have the nation feel that the program funding was justified (Bindas, 205). As with every expense a government validates, there are people for and against Apollo. Only this time, it was a billion-dollar expense with no tangible gains for the people themselves.

Even within NASA, they were fully aware of the temporary nature of their financial support. With every success, like Apollo 8 orbiting around the Moon and Apollo 11 landing there, the feeling of justifying the project grew, but the faults in the infrastructure, such as the poor condition of the road network, reminded the people every day that there are places to put those billions of dollars into on the home soil. This can be attributed as the opinion of a few, since no layman knows the *status quo* of the whole nation’s infrastructure, only their personal experience.

5.3 The Views of the African-American Community

Civil rights movements were rapidly gaining popularity in the 1960’s, and especially the African-American population rose to defend their rights as United States citizens. “At a Congressional hearing in 1966, Martin Luther King brought up what seemed to be a ‘striking absurdity in committing billions of dollars to reach the moon where no people live, while the densely populated slums are allocated minuscule appropriations’” (Maher 141, as cited by Bindas, 205). This statement brought up by the leading African-American activist gained much support within the movement and could affect the Apollo project negatively. The main populace was now alerted to the fact that a large percentage of the people in the United States were still treated as second-class citizens. Well-known examples of this behaviour were African-American-allocated housing districts, schools, restrooms and even seats on the bus, particularly in the southern regions of the US, where the segregation was strongest.

The Apollo project was often said to “benefit mankind”, for example in The Washington Post and its article “For the Benefit of All Mankind”, but many people would start to question this. Interviewee Robert H. asks in his interview “was the Apollo program really ‘benefiting mankind’”, as it was advertised to, when so many “don’t have good homes to live in” (Bindas, 205). Ralph Abernathy,

another African-American activist, came to Cape Kennedy before the launch of Apollo 11 riding mule wagons to protest the policy of ignoring the pressing civil rights concerns and focusing on sending a few white men to the Moon (Maher, as cited by Bindas, 205). In July 1969, the time of Apollo 11, the African-American community was still very dissatisfied with the current state of affairs regarding housing, poverty, unemployment, and the assassination of Martin Luther King. In September 1970, African-American culture magazine *Ebony* released an article covering the black scientists working at NASA for the Apollo missions, but included a preface that said: “From Harlem to Watts, the first moon landing ... was viewed cynically as one small step for ‘The Man’” (Morris 33, as cited by Bindas, 205). Even though the African-American community was involved in the technological push to land a man on the Moon, due to the overall discrimination and feeling like second-class citizens, they did not feel the same pride and bliss the majority of US citizens felt.

5.4 Women’s Point of View

Like the African-American community, women did not feel the same connection to Apollo as white men did. According to Bindas, female interviewees often had self-deprecating comments like “I was having babies ... I don’t remember what was going on in the world. I was a housewife and busy.” This comes off as feeling that their place in the historical moment was not as significant as men’s (206). Even though women were heavily involved in, for example, the mathematics needed to calculate trajectories as represented in the 2016 movie *Hidden Figures*, they still felt underrepresented in the media of that time. People most often seen in the media were of course the astronauts, but other ones shown were male mission controllers and NASA administrators. Due to the nature of their work, which did not interest the media as much, female mathematicians and other scientists within the project were left out of the limelight.

Women were officially barred from becoming astronauts during that era. As early as 1962, seven years prior to the first Moon landing, a special sub-commission hearing of the House of Representatives was held regarding if women were overlooked in the program. This hearing found that no women were qualified (Lathers, 37, as cited by Bindas, 206). This underqualification was due to women not being involved in experimental Air Force spaceflights, for example the X-15 project, where Neil Armstrong himself flew. As per usual of that era, “female issues”, such as pregnancy and the menstrual cycle were also an argument towards women not being able to go to space, as ruled by both the House of Representatives and NASA (Bindas, 206). The aforementioned “female issues” are now debunked as reasons not to go to space, and for example the International Space Station carries both men and women, and a notable example of this is astronaut Christina Koch, who spent 328 days

in space in a single go, setting the record for female astronauts (Whiting, nasa.gov). This is a prime example of women being capable of doing everything in space that men do, and that the decision of the hearing was unjust.

Since the environment and culture were hindering women from living a social life, the female interviewees often mentioned family matters as the most notable things from that era. Janice K. found the Moon landings “great”, but the main thing that ruled over her memory of that era was “all about ... family” (Bindas, 2006). A common way of organizing the family life was such that the husband worked and provided for the whole family, and the wife would stay home and raise the children and keep the home in good shape. Women working outside of the home was a rare occurrence, and even more so in STEM fields, and the expectation was for the woman to stay at home and have children as soon as possible. This common prejudice ties into the thought of “men going to the Moon” evident in the interview data presented.

Another female interviewee, named Char, confessed that she is even embarrassed that she remembers very little about the era of Moon landings. She and other housewives during that time formed their own “bubble”, in which the Apollo project was not a part of (Bindas, 2006). This model of housewives being surrounded and even overwhelmed by their housework and taking care of children, thus leaving outside matters out of their personal interests, could imply that the position was to blame for the women’s lack of interest towards Apollo. But there is also contradictory evidence: interviewee Diane was a young university student in 1969, and she was not that interested in Apollo either (Bindas, 2006). Although university studies are intense, they do not require immediate, around-the-clock attention the same way babies and young children do. Interviewee Diane recollected that her life was centred around other cultural aspects of that time, for example sorority life, rock and roll music and anti-war culture (Yankush).

Perhaps the most crucial part of her interview is from what little Diane remembers from the Moon landings is that her father and his friends were very excited about them (Bindas, 2006; Yankush). This yet again backs up the argument that Apollo was a *manned* mission to the Moon, more specifically a middle-to-upper class white manned mission. Although Diane was in a different setting than the housewives mentioned before, Apollo still did not capture her interest in a way that it captured, for example, her father’s.

Could the female populace of the US have been more interested in the project if there was a female astronaut alongside Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the Moon? This question is hard to answer now, but perhaps it would have lessened the effect of women being more distanced from the

project than men. From the data presented gathered from the interviews, the attitude towards women's place in the society hindered their ability to follow politics and historical events such as Apollo, but it cannot be held reasonable for every case. Of course, following politics or being interested in space aviation is not an intrinsic value, and no-one should be held in lesser value due to not doing so. From what the interviewees recollect from that era, and looking at the Apollo project in itself, the dual concept of housewives' partial social isolation and the Apollo project consisting of almost completely men can provide reasoning for most instances of females not being interested in the Moon landings and not feeling as represented as a group.

6 CONCLUSION

To conclude, let us answer the research questions set in the beginning:

1. John F. Kennedy's political agenda was to convince the nation of the importance of winning the Space Race by landing on the Moon before the Soviet Union.
2. Richard Nixon's agenda was to use Apollo as a tool for détente, to mend the relations between the US and USSR.
3. The extent of Bindas' interviewees' allusion towards Kennedy and Nixon is small, but still exists. Kennedy is referred to more than Nixon, proving his discourse as more successful
4. US citizens viewed Project Apollo as a great success on a nationwide scale. Different groups reacted differently: White men celebrated it, African-American communities criticized it, and women rarely felt a connection to it at all. Individuals felt varying feelings about Apollo, as expected, but the feelings often mirrored the group-level feelings.

Kennedy's rhetoric is established to be more successful than Nixon's. This is evident in Bindas' interview data, where people reminiscing that era allude to the rhetoric of ideological superiority. Kennedy's rhetoric has connections to Bindas' interview data and historical background, proving its efficiency. Examples of those include the overall acceptance of the Space Race and ideological supremacy over the Soviet Union present in the memories of the interviewees. Although the opposing notion of not feeling connection to the Apollo project, mainly in minorities and women, is evident, Kennedy's rhetoric went through to the white and Christian majority of the people.

President Nixon's rhetoric was pointed outwards from the United States, not towards the U.S. populace, like Kennedy's. Nixon continuously mentions Apollo 11 being an achievement of mankind as a whole, not just the United States proving their technological and ideological supremacy over other countries, which was Kennedy's selling point eight years earlier. The two presidents' rhetoric and goals differ from each other, which is also an indication of the changing world: perhaps it would be beneficial to all mankind to create and maintain good relations, even across ideological differences. Nixon was on the forefront of this appeasement policy and would use every chance to solidify it further within the United States national consensus and identity.

The feat of landing men on the Moon before the Soviet Union ended the Space Race in favour of the United States and solidified their place as the world leading nation in terms of technological capability. In doing so, they also proved the free market way of life better than the communist one, gaining power in the ideological field of the Cold War. President John F. Kennedy's marketing abilities constitute towards Apollo being a success, and although the average United States citizen

felt pride in the Moon landings, there were social issues affecting other people's views of it negatively.

The argument can be made that Kennedy's determination and influence put the first man on the Moon, six years after his untimely passing. His likeability as a president and well thought out speeches, combined with his ability to voice the speeches in an appealing way, connected with the populace and convinced them to support the Apollo Project. As argued in the analysis segment of this thesis, Kennedy's rhetoric was able to appeal to the people by using both American exceptionalism and tactics such as polarising matters that were not as black and white as he worded them to be, for example the matter of weaponization of space versus scientific exploration.

Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landing on the Moon was televised across the globe, and it gave the people of United States something concrete to view and form memories based upon. Landing the first man on the Moon created a moment of pride for the whole nation, something collective to remember the times positively from. Except everyone could not feel the same; social issues continued to divide the nation, and the joy emanating from that triumph was short-lived.

The treatment of people of African-American descent as second-class citizens while billions of taxpayer money, partially their money, was funded towards putting a few white men on the surface of the Moon made them feel even more discriminated by the system. The evident absence of African-Americans in the Apollo limelight made them feel distanced from the society and Apollo alike. Even though John F. Kennedy included the African-American community and their rights in his presidential campaign of 1960, he did not take part in their civil rights struggle until 1963. In 1964, Kennedy indeed did usher forward the Civil Rights Act, but that was only after much civil unrest and rioting.

While women were in otherwise good regard within the society, the assumption of women staying at home and taking care of the children hurt their social life and put an unfair workload on their shoulders. From working outside of their homes, men were able to develop a substantial social network, from which they gained likeminded friends to be interested in more niche matters like politics and space aviation. Women had less such opportunities, and therefore had a harder time developing interests outside of their social isolation bubble.

As an ending note, let it be said that even though the 1960's were a time of hardships for many within the United States of America, the feat of landing on the Moon and returning is one yet to be matched, let alone surpassed. It was the will of a man, albeit a President of the United States, and the will of a

nation that made it possible. Astronauts, and even NASA itself, were a small piece in this puzzle, which upon completion propelled humanity into the age of space.

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8 APPENDIX:

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9 FIGURES:

Figure 1. *Plaque on the landing gear of the Apollo 11 lunar module*. NASA.

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Figure 2. *President Nixon visits Apollo 11 crew in quarantine*. NASA, July 24, 1969. Image number S69-21365. <https://history.nasa.gov/afj/lrl/apollo-quarantine.html>

Figure 3. *Earthrise*. Picture taken by William Anders during Apollo 8. December 24, 1968. <https://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/alsj/a410/AS8-14-2383HR.jpg>